



REMEMBERING OUR FALLEN FIRE FIGHTERS

by Scott Mellott, Retired

The subject of my June 2009 article (archived on my web site) was about four tragic deaths that the Houston Fire Department expensed in the first 5 months of the year 2009. The first HFD related death was that of Miss Leigh Boone who died after being involved in an accident between two HFD fire apparatus on March 30th. The next two deaths were our brother Fire Fighters, James Harlow and Damion Hobbs who died early morning of April 12, Easter Sunday, while fighting a house fire on Houston's south side.

The fourth death was that of Cohnway Johnson. His information in my June article was only 102 words. The shortness of his information was only due to time constraints and at the time his death was not considered an official line of duty death.

Cohnway Matthew Johnson, Member of the Val Jahnke Academy, fell victim to a heat stroke on the morning of April 29, 2009 and was transported to Memorial Herman Hospital, he was in the ICU until he passed away on Monday evening, May 04, 2009.

Just recently the State of Texas has declared Cohnway an official Line-of-Duty Death. I have been in contact with Cohnway's dad, Mike Johnson, for the last several months and thought it would be appropriate to have him share some information about his son.



Cohnway Matthew Johnson
October 04 1982 – May 04 2009
FIREFIGHTER / EMT

Cohnway knew at a very early age that he wanted to be a Fire Fighter. He started off drawing pictures of Fire Engines for art projects in the 1st and 2nd grades. He had a Great Uncle that was a Chief in the Austin Fire Department that inspired him.

Cohnway went from pre-kindergarten through 12th grade in Pflugerville Texas. He was very athletic and started playing baseball and PEE-WEE football when he started the 3rd grade and continued in football until he graduated.

He graduated from Pflugerville High School in 2001. He then went to Steven F Austin in Nacogdoches for 1 year and took classes in both Forestry and Kinesiology. His heart wasn't in these studies so he came home and told his Mother and I he was going to the Fire Academy. He then went to Austin Community College from 08/03 – 05/04 to take the Firefighter and EMT classes where he made the Presidents Honor Roll and finished with a 4.0 GPA.

Cohnway then got his first paid Firefighter/EMT job in Yoakum Texas. He was employed there from 11/04 – 05/06. He left Yoakum for higher pay in the Oak Hill Fire Department in Travis County where he worked from 05/06 until 05/09. He also worked part time for the Westlake and Manor Fire Departments during this time. While at Oak Hill Fire Department, he took every chance to take any kind of class offered to him that would add to his list of achievements for the Department.

Cohnway had these certifications: Fire Officer I, Fire Service Instructor I, Hazardous Materials Technician, Driver/Operator-Pumper, and Fire Fighter Basic.

Cohnway also had training in swift water rescue and high angle rescue. He had these certificates mailed from FEMA to be sent home to be picked up the weekend after he went down from heat stroke.

Cohnway loved his profession and I often told him I was jealous of him for having a job that he loved so much. He told me more than once that he'd be just as happy at the station as anywhere else he could be.

The Houston Fire Department lost a very dedicated and loyal employee. He would have been a huge asset to HFD.

Cohnway is buried at the Cook-Walden Capital Parks Cemetery 14501 N. IH 35. We visit him, section H Lot 160 A space #3, and it is without a doubt, the HARDEST thing his Mother and I have ever had to do in our whole life, visit our youngest son in the cemetery.

Remembering To Never Forget

MICHAEL ALLEN BENSON - Served HFD 1975 to 1990 - Died July 19, 2009

TRACY BIRKELBACH - Served HFD 1971-1991 - Died January 1, 2009

DWAYNE CURTIS BROWN - Served HFD 1979 to 2009 - Died December 21, 2009

JOHNNY RAY BROZ - Served HFD 1950 to 1989 - Died December 10, 2009

BENNIE RAY BURNES - Served HFD 1960 to 1990 - Died August 9, 2009

BOBBY DEE CARRAWAY - Served HFD 1968 to 2004 - Died February 18, 2009

RAYMOND E. CLARK - Served HFD 1951 to 1979 - Died December 25, 2009

WILLIAM JAMES CLEMANS - Served HFD 1963 to 1987 - Died March 26, 2009

GEORGE HARALN CONWAY - Served HFD 1952 to 1977 - Died January 13, 2009

KENDALL LEE CURRIE - Served HFD 2004 to 2009 - Died September 2, 2009

ANTHONY WAYNE FOSTER SR. - Served HFD 1982 to 2005 - Died April 26, 2009

CLOVIS EUGENE GOSS - Served HFD - Served HFD 1954 to 1971 - Died Sept. 30, 2009

ALVIN "BUSTER" CLYDE GREEN - Served HFD 1950 to 1974 - Died October 30, 2009

MELVIN GRISBY JR. - Served HFD - Served HFD 1964 to 1994 - Died Sept. 11, 2009

RONALD WAYNE GUNNELS, SR. - Served HFD 1964 to 2001 - Died March 11, 2009

JAMES ARTHUR HARLOW - Served HFD 1979 to 2009 - Died April 12, 2009

Line-of-Duty Death

CLAUDE HARMON HARRIS - Served HFD 1950 to 1974 - Died May 6, 2009

ROBERT LEE HARRINGTON - Served HFD 1977 to 2006 - Died September 5, 2009

THEODORE GREGORY HILL SR. - Served HFD 1970 to 1990 - Died January 21, 2009

DAMION JON HOBBS - Served HFD March 7, 2009 to April 12, 2009 - Died April 12, 2009

Line-of-Duty Death

JERRY JOE HUBENAK - Served HFD 1958 to 1983 - Died April 11, 2009

PHILLIP LEE HUGENS - Served HFD 1977 to 2005 - Died February 1, 2009

COHNWAY MATTHEW JOHNSON - Served HFD 2009 - Died May 4, 2009

Line-of-Duty Death

NORMAN WALTER KIESEWETTER SR. - Served HFD 1971 to 1991 - Died October 3, 2009

ALTON LAMAR KLUTTS - Served HFD 1950 to 1986 - Died April 12, 2009

JACK ALLEN MARTIN - Served HFD 1963 to 1983 - December 19 2009

MARTIN DAVID MAY - Served HFD 1974 to 1994 - Died October 7, 2009

JOE EDWARD MARGAN SR. 1946 to 1973 - Died December 11, 2009

LASKER ANDREW "PAT" MULLENS - Served HFD 1953 to 1974 - Died May 7, 2009

VINCENT EARL O'LEARY - Served HFD 1963 to 1991 - Died July 2, 2009

KYLE QUINCEY RANEY - Served HFD 1973 to 2008 - Died April 16, 2009

BRIAN ELLIS RHONE - Served HFD 1998 to 2009 - Died May 23, 2009

JAMES DONALD "JD" ROBINSON - Served HFD 1941 to 1970 - Died April 8, 2009

PHILLIP STEVEN "STEVIE" SCHULTZ - Served HFD 1967 to 2002 - Died March 5, 2009

OMER EARL STANFORD - Served HFD 1952 to 1978 - Died October 16, 2009

LESTER WARREN TYRA, SR. - Served HFD 1959 to 1980 - Died October 8, 2009

LEROY EDWARD WARD, JR. - Served HFD 1959 to 1984 - Died April 23, 2009

RODNEY DALE WATERS - Served HFD 1985 to 2009 - Died January 31, 2009

SEYMORE WILLIS - Served HFD 1951 to 1977 - Died June 16, 2009

Total from January 1, 2010

to present - 0 Deaths

Total for the Year 2009 - 39 Deaths

LINE-OF-DUTY DEATH ANNIVERSARIES FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY



January 04, 1983

RONNIE LUZETTE FRANKLIN
District Chief, Station 7

January 07, 1954

FRANK CATINO
Pipe and Ladderman,
Station 1

January 21, 1949

VERNON JOHN DORSETT
Assistant Fire Chief,
Station 1

January 31, 1951

JOSEPH "BULL" CONNOR
Chauffeur, Station 1

The months that I will submit my "Remembering the Fallen Fire Fighter" articles are as follows: January, February, April, June, August, October, and December. Along with my article will be the "Remembering to Never Forget" page with two picture pages, "The Faces of Local 341." On the off-months, the "Remembering the Fallen Fire Fighter" page along with one of the "The Faces of Local 341" pages will be published.

Please visit my Memorial Website, www.houstonfirememorial.org, which contains information on current Houston Fire Fighter Deaths, Obits, Line-of-Duty Deaths and many other items. Many new items have been recently added. If you do not have access to the website or if you have any questions about my memorial endeavors, please call me at (713) 729-6536 or email: scottmel@juno.com.

Thanks – Scott Mellott

The Faces of Local 341

1932 to 2009

Houston Professional Fire Fighter's Association

Photos on this page submitted by Scott Mellott (Retired)



Photo provided by Harold Arnt

Harold Arnt - Booster 3 - 1955



Photo provided by Gilbert Bennett

Station 28 - 5116 Westheimer - about 1983

(l/r) Keith Bobbitt - FF, Terry Colburn



Photo provided by Michael Augun

Engine 60 -2925 Jeanetta - 1975 (taken on the side of Station 28)

**(l/r) A. J. Scardino - FF, Michael J. Augun - FF, Captain Willie Bright, Henry Garza - Chauffeur
"Bill" - Station Mascot**

The Faces of Local 341

1932 to 2009

Houston Professional Fire Fighter's Association

Photos on this page submitted by Scott Mellott (Retired)



Photo provided by Scott Mellott

Station 20/A - 6902 Navigation - August 24, 2009

**Station under reconstruction after being destroyed
by Hurricane Ike - September 13, 2008.**

**Picking out a spot for the plaques: Captain Jimmy
Campbell, Johnny Villarreal - E/O, Aaron Bond - FF,
Arnie Ruiz - FF**



Photo provided by Scott Mellott

Station 20/A - 9902 Navigation - January 5, 2010

**Station newly remodeled after being destroyed
by Hurricane Ike - September 13, 2008.**

Crew showing off the newly installed plaques.

**(l/r) Captain Jimmy Campbell, Richard Lejarza - E/O,
Wade Winters - FF, Captain Eric Kellmann, Aaron
Bond - FF, Johnny Villarreal - E/O, Peter Gans - FF,
Javier Govea - FF, Arnie Ruiz - FF, John Otts - E/O**



Photo provided by Scott Mellott

Engine 62/D - November 28, 2008

**(l/r) Captain George Gober, Joe Burleson - E/O,
Sam Saenz - FF, Edward Weaver - FF**



Photo provided by Scott Mellott

Engine 13/C - November 14, 2009

**(l/r) Brandon Schwartz - FF, James Alvarez - E/O,
Captain William Gunderson, Justin Crawley - FF**

Missing Station Dedication Plaques

by Scott Mellott, Retired

To quote a long time Fire Fighter friend “here we go again,” - this really applies here. Since my December “Missing Fire Station Plaque Article” came out, my phone has not been ringing off the wall to tell me where I can go get the missing for 8 years plaque that came off Station 8, which was previously located where the now Toyota Center is. My intentions are to start researching and finding Fire Fighters that were working at Station 8 when it was moved to it’s temporary quarters in 2001. Any help with this would be appreciated.

My contact information is 713-729-6536 or email scottmel@juno.com

To update those that don’t know the story, I started this project in the early 1990’s. I bought a sand blast cabinet and installed it in my garage. I began to sandblast these plaques one-by-one and when I finished with each one my good friend David Barrier lacquered them so they would not tarnish. Then I was able to use a fire department carpenter to help me with the installation. I have only three more to do and will hopefully finish those in the near future. They are Station 19 and Station 42 - which by the way has two plaques.

Here is the list of the station’s that have had their old plaques installed into the new station.

Station 2-installed 1992

Station 3-installed 1997

Station 4-installed 1996

Station 5-installed 2002

Station 6-installed 1992

Station 10-installed 2003

Station 11-installed 1996

Station 15-installed 1999

Station 16-installed 1979 by station crew

Station 18-installed 2004

Station 20-from original station-installed 2003 & again in 2009

**Station 20-install 2009-from the Station built in 1973
and destroyed by Ike in September 2008.**

Station 24-installed 2009

Station 25-installed 2003

Station 27-installed 2005

Station 28-installed 1993

Station 33-installed 2004

Station 34-installed 1993

Station 37-installed 2009



This plaque, which showed it's age, was refinished and letters painted by Monti from the HFD Fab Shop - thanks so much for your help.



*Old plaque in it's new home.
(l/r) Captain Warren Ayres - 37/A, Chris Horst - 37/A*